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**THE SENATE
STATE OF MICHIGAN**

BENZIE, CLARE, KALKASKA, LAKE, LEELANAU, MANISTEE,
MECOSTA, MISSAUKEE, OSCEOLA, ROSCOMMON, WEXFORD

APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY
CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES
VICE-CHAIR, GENERAL GOVERNMENT
VICE-CHAIR, HISTORY, ARTS, AND LIBRARIES
COMMERCE AND LABOR
FINANCE

**Sen. McManus' Oct. 12 floor statement:
Governor bungles closure of Baldwin prison**

The state's contract with the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility is set to run out on Friday, and it seems we are left with more questions than answers regarding the future of the facility and the community.

It seems easy on the surface to say the folks who worked at the prison can just get jobs at other facilities, but those of us who actually take the time to visit our communities know things are never quite that simple.

And no, Governor, driving through a community is not the same as visiting it. That's where the term "limousine liberal" comes from.

This so-called "solution" also fails to address the larger issue – the state is reneging on its contract and causing an entire community to lose its economic base.

The GEO Group made every effort to work with the Department of Corrections to make the facility and the contract meet our state's changing needs, and this administration would not even come to the table.

The administration has sent a dangerous message to businesses looking to invest in our state and the communities that welcome them.

Is it worth the savings? Let's see. According to the Auditor General's report, closing the Baldwin prison would have saved only \$2.2 million last year, not the \$18 million claimed.

Now the GEO Group has raised a legitimate concern regarding rent for the building they tailor-made to the state's specifications and built in Lake County at considerable expense.

If the state indeed owes rent on that building, we may not see any savings from closing the prison.

Didn't you read the fine print, Governor? As a Harvard-educated attorney and Michigan's former attorney general, I don't know how you could have missed that detail.

How is the administration dealing with this development? They are pointing their fingers at the Legislature, claiming it is our responsibility to get the state out of the mess the governor has caused for us.

It seems to me we already gave her an out by finding alternative savings in the Corrections budget so the state wouldn't have to break its contract with the GEO Group, but she refused to take it.

I'm sorry, but the buck stops at the governor's desk on this one. It is up to her to find a solution to the problems she created by closing the Baldwin prison. The community is waiting.